

REMARKS

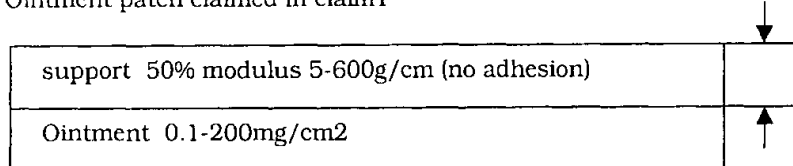
Claims 1-12 are all the claims pending in the application.

At page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Ueda et al. Further, at page 3 of the Office Action, claims 1-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Ueda et al.

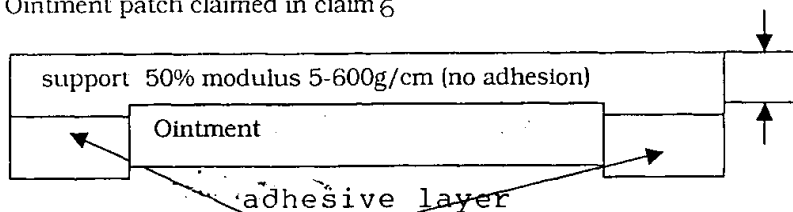
Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for the following reasons.

The ointment patches of the present invention are as follows:

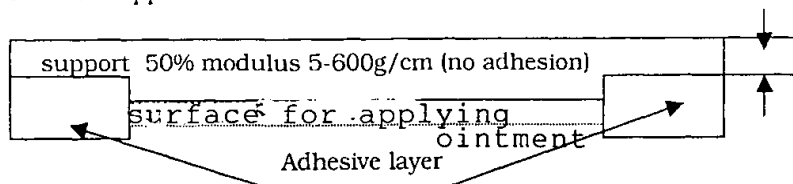
Ointment patch claimed in claim 1



Ointment patch claimed in claim 6



Ointment applicator claimed in claim 8



RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No. 10/031,409

On the other hand, Ueda et al merely discloses that the pharmaceutical composition for percutaneous drug absorption can be made up into patches, for example, by spreading said composition over an appropriate support member (made of aluminum, for instance) (column 4, lines 10-14; Figs. 4 and 5). However, Ueda et al does not disclose the thickness of the support member.

Further, the support member of the present invention has specific physical properties, such as 50% modulus. Applicants submit that aluminum does not have the specific 50% modulus values as recited in the present claim 1. Ueda et al does not suggest any other material as the support member.

Still further, since the patch consisting of an aluminum support and ointment cannot follow to joint areas, such as elbows and knees, the patch may come off the areas or shift.

In view of the above, the present invention is not anticipated or rendered obvious by Ueda et al, and thus the rejections should be withdrawn.

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
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The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Fang Liu
Registration No. 51,283

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: December 8, 2003